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blood, and out of the throat of Brokaw's bear there rolled a rumbling, snarling roar that was like the deep-chested bellow of an angry bull. With that roar they came together again, Tara waiting stolidly and with panting sides for the rush of his enemy.

It was hard for David to see what was happening in that twisting contortion of huge bodies; but as they rolled heavily to one side he saw a great red pool of blood where they had lain.

A HAND fell on his shoulder. He looked round. Brokaw was leering at him.

"Great scrap, eh?"

There was a look in his red face that revealed the pitiless savagery of a cat. David's clenched hand was as hard as iron and his brain was filled with a wild desire to strike. He fought to hold himself in.

"Where is—the girl?" he demanded.

Brokaw's face revealed his hatred now, the taunting triumph of his power over this spy. He bared his yellow teeth in an exultant grin.

"Tricked her," he snarled. "Tricked her—like you tricked me! Got the Indian woman to steal her clothes, an' she's up there in her room. And she won't have any clothes until I say so, for she's mine—body and soul—"

David's clenched hand shot out, and in his blow was not alone the cumulative force of all his years of training, but also of the one great impulse he had ever had to kill. In that instant he wanted to strike a man dead—a red-visaged monster, a fiend! His blow sent Brokaw's huge body reeling backward, his head twisted as if his neck had been broken. He had no time to see what happened after that blow. He did not see Brokaw fall. A piercing interruption—a scream that startled every drop of blood in his body—turned him toward the cage.

Ten paces from him, standing at the inner edge of that astounded and petrified circle of men, was the girl. Her white arms gleamed bare, her shoulders were bare, her slim body was naked to the waist, about which she had drawn tightly—as if in a wild panic of haste—an old ragged skirt. It was the Indian woman's skirt. He caught the glitter of beads on it, and for a moment he stared with the others, unable to move or cry out her name.

Then a breath of wind flung back her hair, and he saw her face, the color of marble. She was like a piece of glistening statuary, without a quiver of life that his eyes could see, without a movement, without a breath. Only her hair moved, stirred by the air, flooded by the sun, floating about her shoulders in a lucent cloud of red and gold fires. And out of this she was staring at the cage, stunned into a lifeless and unbreathing posture of horror by what she saw.

David did not follow her eyes. He heard the growl and roar and clashing jaws of the fighting beasts. They were down again; one of the six-inch trees that formed the bars of the cage snapped like a walking-stick as their great bodies lurched against it; the earth shook, the very air seemed a-tremble with the terrific force of the struggle. And only the girl was looking at that struggle—every eye was on her now. David sprang suddenly forth from the circle of men, calling her name.

TEN paces separated them; half that distance lay between the girl and the cage. With the swiftness of an arrow sprung from the bow, she had leaped into life and crossed that space. The loss of a tenth part of a second, and David would have been at her side. He

was that tenth of a second too late. A gleaming shaft, she had passed between the bars; and a tumult of horrified voices rose suddenly above the roar of battle as the girl sprang at the beasts with her bare hands.

Her voice came to David in a scream: "Tara—Tara—Tara!"

His brain reeled when he saw her down—down!—with her little fists pummeling at a great, shaggy head; and in him was the sickening weakness of a drunken man as he squeezed through that eighteen-inch aperture and almost fell at her side. He did not know that he had drawn his automatic; he scarcely realized that, as fast as his finger could press the trigger, he was firing shot after shot, with the muzzle of his pistol so close to the head of Tara's enemy that the reports of the weapon were deadened as by a thick blanket. It was a heavy gun. A stream of lead burned its way into the grizzly's brain—eleven shots.

When he stood up he had the girl close in his arms. The clasp of his hands against her warm flesh cleared his head; and while Tara was rending at the throat of his dying foe, David flung about her the light jacket he wore and drew her swiftly out of the cage.

"Go to your room," he said. "Tara is safe. I will see that no harm comes to him now."

The cordon of men separated for them as he led her through. The crowd was so silent that they could hear Tara's low throat-growling. And then, breaking that silence in a savage cry, came Brokaw's voice:

"Stop!"

He faced them, huge, terrible, quivering with rage. A step behind him was Hauck. There was no longer in his face an effort to conceal his murderous intentions. And close behind Hauck there gathered his white-faced whiskey-mongers, like a pack of wolves waiting for a lead-cry. David expected that cry to come from Brokaw. The girl expected it, and clung to David's shoulders, her bloodless face turned to the danger.

IT was Brokaw who gave the signal to the men.

"Clear out the cage!" he bellowed. "This spy has killed my bear, and he's got to fight me! Clear out the cage!"

He thrust his head and bull-like shoulders forward until his foul, hot breath touched their faces. His red neck was swollen with the passion of jealousy and hatred.

"And in that fight—I'm going to kill you!" he hissed.

It was Hauck who put his hands on the girl.

"Go with him," whispered David, as her arms tightened about his shoulders. "You must go with him, Marge—if I am to have a chance!"

Her face was against him. She was talking low, swiftly, for his ears alone—

with Hauck already beginning to pull her away:

"I will go to the house. When you see me at that window, fall on your face. I have a rifle. I will shoot him dead—from the window."

Perhaps Hauck heard. David wondered, as he caught the glitter in his eyes when he drew the girl away. He heard the crash of the big gate to the cage, and Tara ambled out and took his way slowly and haltingly toward the edge of the forest. When he saw the girl again, he was standing in the center of the cage, his feet in the pool of bears' blood. She was struggling with Hauck, struggling to break from him and get to the house. And now he knew that Hauck had heard, and that he would hold her there, and that her eyes would be on him when Brokaw killed him. For he knew that Brokaw would fight to kill. It would not be a square fight; it would be murder—if the chance came Brokaw's way.

The thought did not frighten him. He was growing strangely calm. He realized the advantage of being unencumbered, and he stripped off his shirt and tightened his belt. And then Brokaw entered. The giant had stripped himself to the waist, and he stood for a moment looking at David, a monster with the lust of murder red in his eyes. It was frightfully unequal—this combat. David felt it—he was blind if he did not see it,—and yet he was still unafraid. A great silence fell. Cutting it like a knife came the girl's voice: "Sakewawin—Sakewawin—"

A brutish growl rose out of Brokaw's chest. He had heard that cry, and it stung him like an asp.

"To-night she will be with me," he taunted David, and lowered his head for battle.

DAVID no longer saw the horde of faces beyond the thick bars of the cage. His last glance, shot past the lowered head and hulking shoulders of his giant adversary, went to the girl. He noticed that she had ceased her struggling and was looking toward him. After that his eyes never left Brokaw's face. He had not realized that Brokaw was so powerful. Sizing him up in that moment before the first rush, he now saw that his one hope was to keep Brokaw from using his enormous strength at close quarters. A clinch would be fatal; in Brokaw's arms he would be helpless. He was conscious of an unpleasant thrill as he thought how easy it would be for the other to break his back, or snap his neck, if he gave him the opportunity. Science! What would it avail him here, pitted against this mountain of flesh and bone, that looked as if it might stand the beating of clubs without being conquered?

His first blow restored his confidence. Brokaw rushed. It was an easy attack to evade, and David's arm shot out and his fist landed against Brokaw's head with a sound that was like the crack of a whip.

Hauck would have gone down under that blow like a log. Brokaw staggered. Even he realized that this was science—the skill of the game—and he was grinning as he advanced again. He could stand a hundred blows like that—a grim and ferocious Achilles with but one vulnerable point, the end of the jaw.

David waited and watched for his opportunity as he gave ground slowly. Twice he circled about the blood-spattered arena, Brokaw following him with leisurely sureness, and yet delaying his attack as if in that steady retreat of his victim he saw a torture too satisfying to put an end to at once. David measured his carelessness, the slow, almost unguarded movement of his great body, his unpreparedness for a *coup de main*—and like a flash he launched himself forward with all the weight of his body behind his effort.

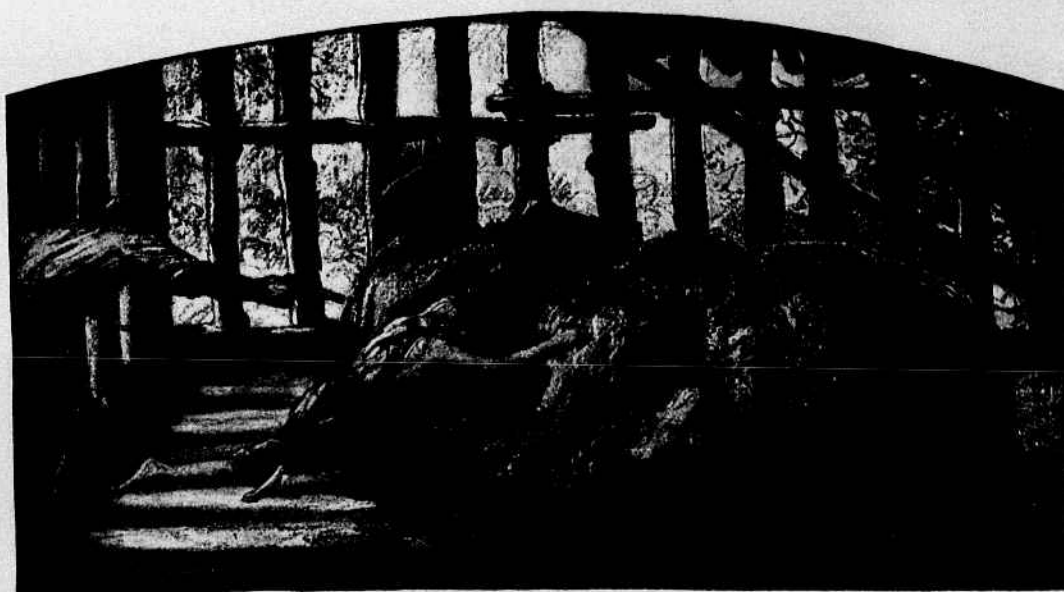
It missed the other's jaw by two inches, that catapultic blow—striking him full in the mouth, breaking his yellow teeth, and smashing his thick lips so that the blood sprang out in a spray over his hairy chest; and as his head rocked backward David followed with a swift left, and a second time missed the jaw with his right—but drenched his clenched fist in blood. Out of Brokaw there came a cry that was like the roar of a beast; and in an instant he found himself battling, not for victory, not for that opportunity he twice had missed, but for his very life.

Against that rushing bulk, enraged almost to madness, the ingenuity of his training alone saved him from immediate extinction. How many times he struck in the hundred and twenty seconds following his blow to Brokaw's mouth he could never have told. His hands were red with Brokaw's blood. It was like striking at a monstrous thing without the sense of hurt, a fiend that had no brain that blows could sicken, a body that was not a body, but an enormity that had strangely taken human form. Brokaw had struck him once—only once in those two minutes. But blows were not what he feared now. He was beating himself to pieces, literally beating himself to pieces, as a ship might have hammered itself against a reef, and fighting with every breath to keep himself out of the fatal clinch. His efforts were costing him more than they were costing his antagonist. Twice he had reached his jaw; twice Brokaw's head had rocked back on his shoulders—and then he was there again, closing in on him, grinning, unconquerable.

WAS there no fairness out there beyond the bars of the cage? Were they all like the man he was fighting—devils? An intermission, only half a minute, enough to give him a chance—

The slow, invincible beast he was hammering almost had him as his thoughts wandered. He only half fended the sledgelike blow that came straight for his face. He ducked, swung up his guard like lightning, and was saved from death by a miracle. That blow would have killed him. He knew it. Brokaw's huge fist landed against the side of his head and grazed off like a bullet that had struck the slanting surface of a rock. Yet the force of it was sufficient to send him crashing back against the bars—and down.

In that moment he thanked God for Brokaw's slowness. He had a clear recollection afterward of almost having spoken the words as he lay dazed and helpless for an infinitesimal space of time. He expected Brokaw to end it there. But Brokaw stood mopping the blood from his face, as if partly blinded by it, while from beyond the cage there came a swiftly growing rumble of voices that ended in a shouting of triumph—white men's shouting.



"He saw her down, her little fists pummeling at a great, shaggy head. He did not know he was firing shot after shot till a stream of lead burned its way into the grizzly's brain."